

The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 was noteworthy as the first federal program designed specifically as a block grant. It was passed during President Lyndon Johnson's administration amid strong national concerns over rising crime rates and proliferating civil disturbances. It reflected President Johnson's policy beliefs that the federal government should do more to assist state and local law enforcement agencies. Funds were allocated to states on a per capita formula to be used in any purpose associated with reducing crime.

This act of 1968 included over \$100 million in funding for community crime control efforts in the form of block grants to states. Within that total, Congress earmarked \$50 million to assist law enforcement agencies, including \$15 million for riot control and \$10 million to fight organized crime.

The initial block grant to the State of Nevada was \$129,000 for planning purposes. Governor Paul Laxalt wrote to Legislative Counsel Russell McDonald on November 18, 1968 explaining that Laxalt was setting up a mechanism to receive this money because there was no state agency to accept the block grant. The Governor wrote:

"Compliance with the terms of the Bill required that the State apply for \$20,000 in Federal funds for pre-planning purposes. This has been received. In order to obtain these funds, it was necessary we first create a state mechanism for receiving them which conformed to the requirements in the Federal Act. This was accomplished by designating the five POST members and adding to them the necessary additional State and local representation...With the Legislature not in session until January, the Federal Bill makes it incumbent on the states to apply for the full planning grant by December 19, 1968. If no application is made by that time, the state's role in the procedure is vacated and the Justice's Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration assumes the state's position and deals directly with local entities within the states."

Laxalt explained to McDonald that the Legislature would need to pass the necessary legislation to create an agency to accept these federal funds, but meanwhile the Governor issued an Executive Order dated December 1, 1968 creating the Nevada Commission on Crime, Delinquency and Corrections. Governor Laxalt appointed fifteen members of the Commission and Carrol T. Nevin as the Director of the Commission. In the executive order this Commission was given three tasks:

- Develop a comprehensive statewide plan for the improvement of law enforcement and the reduction, prevention and control of delinquency throughout the State.
- Define, develop and correlate programs and projects for the State and the units of general local governments in the State or combination of States or units for improvement in law enforcement and the prevention, reduction and control of delinquency throughout the State.
- Establish priorities for the improvement of law enforcement and the control, reduction and prevention of delinquency throughout the State.

In 1969 the Nevada State Legislature ratified the Governor's action and officially established the Commission on Crime, Delinquency and Corrections within the Governor's office. Two years later the Department of Law Enforcement Assistance (DLEA) was created and the Commission placed within this Department.

During the 1970's the DLEA functioned as the one agency that consolidated the criminal justice functions of planning, training, investigation, narcotics, identification and communications. It also acted as administrative support for the Commission on Crime, Delinquency and Corrections. The Department was divided into the following divisions—Planning and Training, Identification and Communications, and Investigations and Narcotics.

The Planning and Training Division was responsible for the statewide comprehensive plan for the improvement of law enforcement in Nevada, development and correlation of programs and projects for state and local governments, and the administration of grants under the Crime Control Act of 1968.

The Identification and Communications Division provided a system of collecting all means of identifying criminals in Nevada and making this information available to all authorized persons. It also maintained laboratories for the investigation and analysis of physical evidence and operated the main criminal justice communications system for Nevada.

The Investigations and Narcotics Division was responsible for furnishing criminal investigative services and the dissemination of information to the general public concerning the dangers of controlled substances. This Division kept records on all people connected with the illegal use of controlled substances and enforced the Controlled Substances Act passed by the Nevada Legislature.

The Nevada Legislature of 1981 terminated both the Commission and the DLEA with the establishment of an investigative division in the Department of Motor Vehicles. Their functions were assumed by the Department of Motor Vehicles: Investigation, Peace Officers Training, while Identification and Communications became a subdivision under the Highway Patrol.

The Commission on Crime, Delinquency and Corrections also had committees and subcommittees that met on a regular basis. These committees included the Washoe County Allocation Committee, the Clark County Allocation Committee, the Small County Allocation Committee, the Communications Subcommittee and the Planning and Allocation Committee.

**Records**

1969-1984

2 cubic feet

The records in this collection include meeting minutes of the Commission plus minutes of some of the committee meetings. Also included are correspondence files, legislation files, planning documents and some grant files, especially grants given to state entities including the Governor's Office, the Attorney General's office and the Nevada Supreme Court. An in-house database provides access to the records.